

Organizing Your Pantry: Teaching Zotero to Graduate Students

By: [Amy Harris Houk](#), [Megan Carlton](#)

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Abstract:

Graduate students collect a lot of food in their pantries throughout their studies but organizing it can be a challenge. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) Libraries support Zotero to help students organize their pantries so they can find what they need when they need it. Zotero is open-source citation management software that allows users to store and organize citation information and PDFs while also integrating with both Word and Google Documents to insert in-text citations and bibliographies in over 9,000 citation styles. The University Libraries at UNCG have adopted Zotero as the supported citation management tool despite campus licensing a subscription-based competing tool. Using an open-source tool is important to the librarians who support it because graduate students typically enter the field after graduation or go to another institution to continue their studies or work. Building their own research library in an open-source product allows them continuity and enables them to easily take with them the library they build in graduate school. Zotero can help students complete research papers and other projects in individual classes as well as help them compile and organize resources for significant projects such as their dissertations.

Time during the lesson is spent brainstorming how students can organize their pantry of sources. Students will discuss the possible approaches (which could include by topic, by class, by dissertation chapter, or some other method) and how they might employ one or more of these methods to organize their sources. Zotero is a pantry that allows people to put sources in multiple categories for easier organization. Students use the rest of the time developing their own organizational schemes and organizing their own pantries. This process of organizing sources in a way that works for students allows them to work more efficiently.

Keywords: Zotero | organizing sources

Article:

*****Note: Full text of article below**

Organizing Your Pantry: Teaching Zotero to Graduate Students

Amy Harris Houk, Associate Professor and Department Head, Research, Outreach, and Instruction, UNC Greensboro, amy_harris@uncg.edu

Megan Carlton, Science Librarian and Assistant Professor, UNC Greensboro, megancarlton@uncg.edu

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Graduate students collect a lot of food in their pantries throughout their studies but organizing it can be a challenge. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) Libraries support Zotero to help students organize their pantries so they can find what they need when they need it. Zotero is open-source citation management software that allows users to store and organize citation information and PDFs while also integrating with both Word and Google Documents to insert in-text citations and bibliographies in over 9,000 citation styles. The University Libraries at UNCG have adopted Zotero as the supported citation management tool despite campus licensing a subscription-based competing tool. Using an open-source tool is important to the librarians who support it because graduate students typically enter the field after graduation or go to another institution to continue their studies or work. Building their own research library in an open-source product allows them continuity and enables them to easily take with them the library they build in graduate school. Zotero can help students complete research papers and other projects in individual classes as well as help them compile and organize resources for significant projects such as their dissertations.

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LEARNING OUTCOMES/PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Students will use a citation management tool that meets their research needs.
- Students will brainstorm methods of organizing their research.
- Students will compare Zotero-generated citations to authoritative examples and make changes in Zotero as needed.

NUMBER SERVED

- 5–25 students (depending on the size of the computer lab space) per session
- 3–5 sessions per semester at varying times of day and days of the week

Sessions are marketed to graduate students and new faculty through departmental librarian liaisons and other available marketing channels, such as social media and direct marketing through the Graduate School.

COOKING TIME

- 1–2 hours to prepare before the first workshop
- 75–90 minutes for the workshop

DIETARY GUIDELINES

This session is important not just because it teaches a tool that is helpful and relevant to graduate students but also because it helps them envision a framework for organizing the vast quantity of resources they amass during their coursework and in the process of writing their dissertation.

This activity fits into three of the ACRL *Framework* frames:

- Information Has Value. Citing sources properly according to established citation styles shows that the researcher “respect[s] the original ideas of others,” a disposition for this frame. Zotero is a tool that assists researchers in managing citations so they can be properly cited.
- Scholarship as Conversation. Zotero

streamlines the process of source integration and citation, which enables researchers to contribute to the scholarly conversation at any level.

- Research as Inquiry. Knowledge practices for this frame include “organize information in meaningful ways” and “synthesize ideas gathered from multiple sources.” The discussion of how to use Zotero to organize information using collections enables researchers to organize information in a manner that is meaningful for them.

The outcomes from this lesson also fit into the UNCG Libraries Learning Goals and Outcomes (<http://go.uncg.edu/libsls>). These outcomes represent the skills and attitudes we focus on developing with students through workshops, course-integrated information literacy instruction, and research consultations.

- Credit. Students will value the intellectual property of information creators and use sources ethically.
- Students will use citation resources to create or modify citations in the appropriate citation style.

The ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* and the UNCG Libraries Learning Goals and Outcomes are both relevant to this project because the *Framework* is the widely accepted framework for information literacy in our field. The UNCG Libraries Learning Goals and Outcomes are heavily used locally to assess our information literacy program.

INGREDIENTS & EQUIPMENT

- 1 computer for each student (either a lab computer or they can bring their own)
- Internet/wireless access
- 1 instructor station with projector/screen
- Handout with relevant links

PREPARATION

- The librarian should have Zotero and necessary plug-ins installed on the instructor’s computer station in advance.
- The librarian should also download the PDF of an article to the desktop of the computer in advance of the session to show workshop participants how to add PDFs and extract the citation information from the metadata.

COOKING METHOD

1. Introduction/demo. (15 minutes)

- a. Present a quick overview of Zotero and the general perks of using citation management software, such as the ability to quickly add information through a browser, ability to organize sources, cloud storage for PDFs, ease of inserting in-text citations and bibliography, and the ability to easily change citation styles in a paper.
- b. Demonstrate how to download Zotero desktop and web browser extension as students follow along at their own workstations (both available at zotero.org).
- c. Have students create their personal Zotero account. We recommend that

students use a personal email address to sign up instead of their institutional one since they can continue to use Zotero when they leave the institution.

- d. After students create their account, Zotero will send an email confirmation to the email they use to register. Students should open the desktop client and log in to their Zotero account.

2. Save sources. (10 minutes)

- a. Demonstrate how to add sources to Zotero from various databases and the library catalog. Use general databases from platforms that provide multiple databases at your institution (such as Academic Search Complete from EBSCO or Proquest Central), and remind workshop attendees how to access databases relevant to their disciplines, such as through LibGuides or database lists by subject. Use a topic from a workshop participant if you feel comfortable doing so or use a topic of your choice.
- b. Have students find sources to add, using one of the databases demonstrated using the browser extension.

3. Add PDFs. (5 minutes)

- a. The librarian will demonstrate how to drag a PDF into Zotero so that workshop participants can add PDFs they already have stored on their computers to their Zotero libraries. This is a valuable tool for students who already have PDFs saved on their computers or other cloud-storage services. The metadata should be

- extracted automatically when the PDF is dragged in, but if it doesn't, right-clicking on the PDF will bring up a menu with an option that says "Extract metadata from PDF."
- 4. Organize sources.** (5–10 minutes)
- a. Lead a brief brainstorming session of ways people can organize their Zotero libraries (examples could be by topic, by class, by dissertation chapter, etc.).
 - b. Walk students through creating a collection in their own library by clicking the New Collection icon directly under "File" in the menu.
- 5. Cite in Google Docs.** (5–10 minutes)
- a. Have students open Google Docs and complete the following:
 - Write a sentence about one of their articles.
 - Insert an in-text citation at the end of the sentence using the Zotero tab.
 - Create a bibliography at the end of the document.
 - Share a link to the Google Doc with the head chef by email.
- 6. Race the head chef.** (10 minutes)
- a. In shared Google Doc, have a link to a specific source (provide the link to students as a Go Link or Tiny URL or on a handout); a template is available at <http://go.uncg.edu/racethelibrarian>.
 - b. Go over directions for the activity.
 - When the timer starts, students (and head chef) will go to the source and create a citation within the shared document.

- The head chef will create the citation by hand in the document.
 - Students may choose how they create the citation to try to beat the head chef.
- c. When students finish putting their citation in the shared doc, they should type the time from the timer and their initials beside their citation.
 - d. When everyone is finished, have the students check the citations for accuracy (see figure 1).
- 7. Wrap up.** (5 minutes)
- a. Ask if there are questions.
 - b. Provide links to relevant resources.

ALLERGY WARNINGS

If students are bringing their own devices, it is a good idea to have librarians who are knowledgeable about using both Macs and PCs. If you use a registration form, you can add a question about the type of computer students are bringing so you can have appropriate staffing.

Ideally, two librarians would be present at each training, one to teach and one to float and answer specific questions from individual participants. This can help alleviate having one participant's technical issues derail the whole session.

Race the Librarian

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.576.692&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Librarian Citation

Citation	Style	Initials	Time

Figure 1. Race the Librarian activity

Sometimes when using Zotero with Google Docs, the popup windows pop up behind the main browser window, so it may appear that Zotero isn't working. Participants will need to locate the window in order to update the document preferences or insert citations.

Occasionally, Zotero will not show up in the menu on Google Docs. Refreshing the webpage typically resolves this issue.

CHEF'S NOTES

Time for this session could be shortened by skipping the Race the Librarian activity.

Additional activity: Find a specific journal citation style for a journal in each participant's discipline using the Manage Styles link in the document preferences.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>

- UNCG Libraries Learning Goals and Outcomes. <http://go.uncg.edu/libsls>
- Zotero website. www.zotero.org
- How to download and install Zotero. <https://libguides.unm.edu/Zotero/download>
- Self-guided tour of Zotero, plus other resources. <http://uncg.libguides.com/zotero>
- Race the Librarian activity. <http://go.uncg.edu/racethelibrarian>